



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 161

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2015

No. 140

Senate

The Senate met at 4:30 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

From the depths of gratitude, O Lord, we lift our hearts in prayer. Hear our petitions and fill us with Your peace. Lord, still and quiet our hearts, bringing to us a serenity that comes from trusting the power of Your providential love.

Inspire our lawmakers to develop such a close relationship with You that they would strive to please You always. As You fill their hearts with Your life-transforming Spirit, may Your image in them be more clearly seen. Free them from any thoughts, words, and actions that are contrary to Your love, making them spiritually mature through the power of Your Spirit.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). The majority leader is recognized.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, a new Senate majority came to office this year with a new outlook on government funding from the previous majority. First, we passed a budget. Then

we worked across the aisle to pass through the committee the dozen bills necessary to fund the government. That is the first time either of these things has happened in 6 long years.

Our commonsense approach represented real hope that with the necessary cooperation from across the aisle, a new and better way of funding the government was actually possible. Democrats initially gave Americans reason to believe they might be ready to offer that bipartisan cooperation. Democrats gave bipartisan committee backing to nearly all of the dozen government funding bills, and a majority of these bills attracted support from at least 70 percent of Democratic Appropriations Committee members. Democrats even bragged about supporting these funding bills in press releases to their constituents.

But this was before Democrats hatched their filibuster summer plan—in other words, block all of the government funding bills in the hopes of provoking a crisis Democrats might exploit to grow the IRS and the DC bureaucracy. As a result, you actually saw Democratic leaders declare that they would use procedural moves to prevent the full Senate from even debating the same funding legislation members of their party had already praised in their press releases to the media.

Democrats even voted repeatedly to block the bill that funds our military. Think about that—funds for our military. It would have been cynical enough for our colleagues to block a bipartisan defense spending bill Democrats had hailed as a “win, win, win” and a “victory” for their States in their press releases, but we are all living in a time of unparalleled international crises. Threats seem to mount less by the day than by the hour. Yet last week Democrats voted again to block the bipartisan bill that funds pay raises and medical care for our troops. It was very extreme.

I wish I could say it was the only extreme position our Democratic friends took last week. On Thursday Senators were given a choice between funding women's health or funding a scandal-racked organization called Planned Parenthood. Republicans stood up for women's health; Democrats stood up for their political friends.

I think Democrats will come to regret their continued prioritization of the needs of the far left over women, over our military, and over seemingly everything else. The question before us now is how to keep the government open in the short term, given the realities we face.

This is what the president of National Right to Life had to say on the matter:

There are two different roads that we can take. One is to insist that no more money go to Planned Parenthood and cause a government shutdown (which [interestingly enough] won't result in actually defunding Planned Parenthood). The other is to take a slightly longer-term approach, taking advantage of the fact that we have the attention of the country as probably never before. . . .

Had Democrats not prevented the Senate from passing the same appropriations bills they voted for and praised, we wouldn't be having this discussion right now. But they did. They pursued a deliberate strategy to force our country into another of these unnecessary crises. This leaves the funding legislation before us as the only viable way forward in the short-term. It doesn't represent my 1st, 2nd, 3rd or 23rd choice when it comes to funding the government, but it will keep the government open through the fall and funded at the bipartisan level already agreed to by both parties as we work on the way forward.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that all time during the quorum calls until 5:30 p.m. be charged equally between both sides.

• This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

S6961